

## MULTI-PROTOCOL SWITCH AND METHOD THEREFORE

### Abstract of the Invention

5 A multi-protocol switch that supports both ATM and IP traffic and method for use is presented. The multi-protocol switch associates certain input connections, as identified by virtual path identifier/virtual connection identifier (VPI/VCI), with either IP or ATM traffic. When the connection identifier for a cell received indicates that the cell is an ATM cell, the multi-protocol switch forwards the cell through the switch, where the forwarding is based on the connection identifier for the cell. If the connection identifier for a cell indicates that the cell is IP traffic, the cell is stored with other cells included in the IP packet to which the cells correspond within the ingress line card of the switch. The destination address included in the packet is used to determine a forwarding decision for the cells included in the packet. After at least partial reassembly, the packet is segmented and forwarded through the switch based on the forwarding decision determined from the destination address.

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